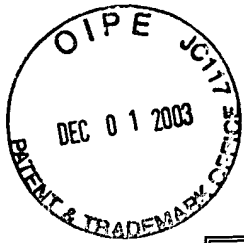


PATENT



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Docket No.: ETTER

In re Application of:)
HEINZ ETTER et al.)
Appl. No.: 09/929,186) Examiner: Roberts, Paul A
Filed: August 14, 2001) Group Art Unit: 3731
For: SURGICAL INSTRUMENT)

SECOND INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

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SIR:

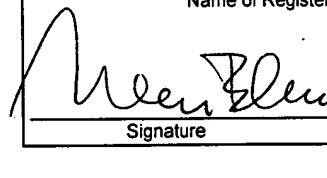
TECHNOLOGY CENTER R3700

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to "Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450", on November 24, 2003.

(Date)

URSULA B. DAY

Name of Registered Representative


Signature

Nov 24 2003
Date of Signature

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.56, applicant wishes to call the attention of the Examiner to the following references A) to D) which were cited in the European Search Report issued by the European Patent Office with regard to the corresponding European patent application No. EP 01 81 0913. Applicant does not admit that any of the cited documents constitutes prior art against the pending application.

	Country:	Patent or Appl. No:	Patentee or Applicant:	Issue or Filing Date:
A)	USA	US 5 370 658 A	Scheller et al.	12-06-1994
B)	USA	US 5 893 873 A	Rader et al.	04-13-1999
C)	Germany	DE 90 16 261 U	Kretz Walter	02-21-1991
D)	USA	US 5 868 761 A	Nicholas et al.	02-09-1999

Copies of these references are submitted herewith along with form PTO-1449. The Examiner is requested to initial the attached form PTO-1449 and to return a copy of the initialed document to the undersigned as an indication that the attached references have been considered and made of record.

☐ This Information Disclosure Statement is filed within three months of the filing date of a national application other than a continued prosecution application under 1.53(d), so that no fee under 37 C.F.R. §1.97 is due.

☐ This Information Disclosure Statement is filed within three months of the date of entry of the national stage as set forth in 1.491 in an international application, so that no fee under 37 C.F.R. §1.97 is due.

☒ This Information Disclosure Statement is filed before the mailing of a first Office Action on the merits, so that no fee under 37 C.F.R. §1.97 is due.

☐ This Information Disclosure Statement is filed before the mailing of a first Office Action after the filing of a request for continued examination under §1.114, so that no fee under 37 C.F.R. §1.97 is due.

☐ This Information Disclosure Statement is filed after the issuance of a first office but before issuance of a final action under §1.113, or a notice of allowance under §1.311.

☐ This Information Disclosure Statement is submitted after the mailing of a final action or a notice of allowance, but before payment of the issue fee.

☐ The undersigned submits the following statement requesting consideration of this statement:

The undersigned hereby states:

☐ That each item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was first cited in any communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement;

☐ That no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application, and, to the knowledge of the person signing the statement after making reasonable inquiry, no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was known to any individual designated in §1.56(c) more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement.

☐ The fee of \$180.00 set forth in 1.17(p).

☐ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the fee as set forth in 1.17(p), and any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 06-0502.

☐ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 06-0502.

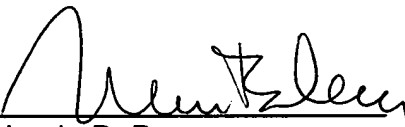
In order to satisfy the requirement under 37 C.F.R. §1.98(a)(3) for a concise explanation of the relevance of each item of information, applicant herewith submits a copy of the European Search Report together with a translation of the relevant pages thereof.

The above-identified application discloses and claims an invention patentable over this prior art.

Entry of the references above set forth into the file of the above application is believed to be in order and is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 06-0502.

Respectfully submitted

By: 
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Reg. No. 47,296

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